

This Week in the Senate

SENATOR CHARLIE CLARY

SENATE DISTRICT 4

May 5, 2006

2006 Legislative Session a Success

Private Property Protection Sent To Voters

This week the Senate passed legislation which will give voters the opportunity to amend the State Constitution to limit the authority of local governments to seize private property for private commercial use. Senate Joint Resolution 626 will appear on the ballot in November 2006. This proposal is in response to the now infamous holding in the Kelo vs. New London, Connecticut Supreme Court case. This resolution will solidify the constitutional right to own private property, which is central to American freedom. It will eliminate the constant worry of private property owners that government officials may come and seize their property. This legislation does not in any way affect traditional taking of private property by government entity for a public purpose. This proposed amendment will give voters the opportunity to ensure a lasting private property protection in the State Constitution and will provide a permanent solution to this problem.

Bill Guarantees Long-term Policies for Seniors

The Senate unanimously passed HB 947, which protects seniors by guaranteeing long-term care insurance policies to people in need of assistance over an extended period of time. Coverage is provided when a person, usually 65 years of age or older, requires physical or emotional assistance over an extended period of time. It includes skilled nursing care coverage, intermediate care, or custodial care for a patient in a nursing facility or residence. This legislation benefits both seniors and insurers. It ensures that Florida's citizens who rely on long-term care insurance for everyday needs will not be confronted with the additional difficulty of wondering whether care will continue.

Accountability for Opportunity Scholarships

This week legislation providing important accountability standards for two of Florida's opportunity scholarship programs—the McKay Scholarship and the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Programs—unanimously passed the Florida Senate. The bill redefines eligibility criteria for participation, mandates mandatory background screening for those who directly contact students, specifies certain qualifications for teachers, includes standardized testing requirements, and stipulates that participating schools complete annual audits. The programs this bill reforms enable students to excel in an environment best suited to their individual educational needs so that they will be on the path to success. This legislation has passed the full Legislature and will become law upon receiving Governor Bush's signature.

A Note from Senator Clary

The Latin term "Sine Die" literally means "without day." In the Florida Senate, Sine Die is what we call the final day of the Legislature's Regular Session. As the celebration of this day approaches, members of the Senate will take time to celebrate and reflect on the events of the past 60 days. The legislation passed during the 108th Session is the product of hard work, careful thought and consideration, and spirited debate and discussion. The lawmaking process is never easy, but it is always an honor for me to represent you in Tallahassee. The encouragement, advice, and support I received from folks back home this Session served as a daily reminder of the real reason I am here—to serve you. I look forward to returning to my hometown, spending time with the people I love, and informing you about this year's legislative accomplishments.

Senator Charlie Clary